

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress  
2nd Session

Vote No. 113

April 30, 1998, 7:05 pm  
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## NATO EXPANSION/Treaty to Limit Tactical Nuclear Weapons

**SUBJECT:** Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic . . . Treaty Document 105-36. Conrad/Bingaman amendment No. 2320.

### ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 16-84

**SYNOPSIS:** Treaty Document 105-36, the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, will give the Senate's advice and consent to admitting those countries as full members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

**The Conrad/Bingaman amendment** would require the President, prior to depositing the instrument of ratification for this treaty, "to certify to the Senate that with regard to non-strategic nuclear weapons: it is the policy of the United States to work with the Russian Federation to increase transparency, exchange data, increase warhead security, and facilitate weapon dismantlement; and that discussions toward these ends have been initiated with the Russian Federation." ("Strategic" nuclear weapons are intercontinental weapons designed for use in a full-scale nuclear war. "Non-strategic," or "tactical" nuclear weapons refer to weapons designed for battlefield use. Most tactical nuclear weapons have been removed from Europe. The United States has destroyed most of the weapons that it has removed; Russia has put most of the weapons it has removed in storage.)

**Those favoring** the amendment contended:

One of the greatest threats in the world today is the large number of Russian tactical nuclear weapons that exist. In 1991, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev unilaterally agreed to withdraw such weapons from Europe. At the time, the United States was estimated to have 3,500 of them in Europe and the Soviet Union was estimated to have around 15,000. Today, the United States has only 400 in Europe and 1,600 overall. In contrast, Russia has removed most of its tactical nuclear weapons but instead of destroying them it has put between 7,000 to 12,000 in storage. The number is so imprecise because we do not have any arms control

(See other side)

YEAS (16)		NAYS (84)				NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (1 or 2%)	Democrats (15 or 33%)	Republicans (54 or 98%)		Democrats (30 or 67%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Jeffords	Bingaman	Abraham	Helms	Akaka	Hollings		
	Bryan	Allard	Hutchinson	Baucus	Inouye		
	Bumpers	Ashcroft	Hutchison	Biden	Kerrey		
	Conrad	Bennett	Inhofe	Boxer	Landrieu		
	Dorgan	Bond	Kempthorne	Breaux	Levin		
	Harkin	Brownback	Kyl	Byrd	Lieberman		
	Johnson	Burns	Lott	Cleland	Mikulski		
	Kennedy	Campbell	Lugar	Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
	Kerry	Chafee	Mack	Dodd	Moynihan		
	Kohl	Coats	McCain	Durbin	Reed		
	Lautenberg	Cochran	McConnell	Feingold	Reid		
	Leahy	Collins	Murkowski	Feinstein	Robb		
	Murray	Coverdell	Nickles	Ford	Rockefeller		
	Wellstone	Craig	Roberts	Glenn	Sarbanes		
	Wyden	D'Amato	Roth	Graham	Torricelli		
		DeWine	Santorum				
		Domenici	Sessions				
		Enzi	Shelby				
		Faircloth	Smith, Bob				
		Frist	Smith, Gordon				
		Gorton	Snowe				
		Gramm	Specter				
		Grams	Stevens				
		Grassley	Thomas				
		Gregg	Thompson				
		Hagel	Thurmond				
		Hatch	Warner				

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

treaties governing the number of tactical nuclear weapons. We have treaties on conventional forces and on nuclear forces, and Russia has sharply cut both. Russia's current weak military condition has lessened its control over these stored weapons. Unlike for strategic weapons, which are deployed and closely monitored, Russia does not have stringent, centralized procedures for ensuring the safety of its stored tactical nuclear weapons. This situation makes it more likely that unstable regimes or terrorists may be able to purchase tactical warheads from corrupt Russian officials at the storage sites. A recent story in the Jerusalem Post, in fact, reports that Iran was able to purchase 4 such warheads earlier this decade. Though designed for tactical use, some of these warheads have yields that are 30 to 40 times greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. A single terrorist attack using one of these warheads would make the Oklahoma City bombing look like a firecracker. Besides the terrorist threat, the fact that many of these warheads have such a high yield creates a strategic concern. These warheads have yields that are the equivalent of many strategic weapons. Thus, failing to restrict tactical weapons undermines and even makes dangerous strategic arms treaties, because Russia may then make warheads that can be used for strategic purposes but escape restrictions by saying that they are for tactical purposes. The ongoing Nunn-Lugar program has helped Russia round up and inventory many of its tactical nuclear weapons, but a more comprehensive effort is needed. Russia and the United States should enter into a treaty to set hard limits on the number of tactical weapons each side may have. The Conrad/Bingaman amendment would therefore require the President to begin efforts to enter into such a treaty before depositing this treaty to expand NATO. We urge our colleagues to support this critically needed amendment.

**Those opposing** the amendment contended:

Our colleagues have proposed a very faulty and dangerous solution to a very real problem. They are correct that Russia has a large, indeterminate number of tactical nuclear weapons in storage; they are correct that those weapons pose a proliferation and terrorist threat; they are correct that Russia should establish better control over those weapons; and they are correct in stating that many of the warheads on those weapons have a high yield. The way to resolve this situation, though, is not to enter into a treaty that will require the United States to destroy its tactical nuclear weapons. The first and unresolvable problem with such a treaty is that it would be unverifiable. The strategic treaties that have been entered into have focused on delivery systems and large bombs, because those can be tracked. It is possible to verify the existence of a missile silo, but tactical weapons are small, easily concealed, and easily moved from place to place. The second problem with such a treaty is that it would hugely weaken the NATO alliance. That alliance heavily depends on widespread participation in nuclear roles by our European allies. The dual-capable aircraft and the few hundred substrategic nuclear gravity bombs which are deployed in Europe provide an essential political and military link between the European and the North Atlantic members of the alliance. The devices deployed on European soil are essential to an equitable sharing of the risk and burden associated with NATO's nuclear mission. They send the message that NATO is ready and willing to use any and all force necessary to deter aggression. Without tactical weapons in Europe, and if attacked by overwhelming conventional forces, the only other option would be strategic warfare that would destroy the United States. That option would put Europe's fate solely at the mercy of the United States' willingness to be destroyed to save Europe. That fact would obviously weaken the value of the alliance substantially. Our European allies understandably want both a tactical and strategic nuclear umbrella as part of NATO's defenses, and we agree that having both makes the alliance much more credible. Right now, the number of tactical nuclear weapons that are in Europe has been sharply reduced because large numbers are no longer needed. The Soviet Union once had superior conventional forces, and a large tactical threat was needed to deter it from attacking. Those forces no longer exist, so only residual tactical weapons are needed. If we were to enter into a treaty to limit the few remaining tactical weapons we would of course comply, as we always do, and we suspect Russia would cheat, as it always has done on arms control treaties. If a new threat were to arise in Europe, those Senators who seem to view treaties as sacrosanct (some Senators in this debate have suggested that treaties override the Constitution, though the truth is that any subsequent treaty or duly enacted law can override any treaty) would argue against increasing tactical weapons in Europe, and our allies' security would be greatly weakened. Again, we do not wish to minimize the danger that is posed by Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal. We also would like to see that arsenal reduced and tightly secured. Entering into a tactical arms control treaty, though, would not further that end, and it would greatly weaken NATO. Therefore, we strongly urge our colleagues to reject this amendment.